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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7413
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4393
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 4246
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5740
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 002089

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR ABRAMS
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (11/21): ISRAEL AND GAZA: "THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION"

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Main Stories:

Al Quds leads with news of the "deteriorating" situation in Gaza, due to continued Israeli closures of crossing points. Bakeries and mills have shut down and stores have run out of bread. Shortages in fuel continue, while the safety of drinking water is imperiled by electricity cuts, according to reporting. The paper adds that homemade Gaza rockets continue to fall on Israel and a Palestinian militant was killed by Israeli tank fire on November 20. Al Quds' lead photo, also featured on Al Hayat Al Jadida's front page, shows two Gazan women cooking over wood fires. In related news, Al Quds front pages statements UNRWA chief Karen Abu Zeid that the organization will "suffer" a budget deficit of \$87 million next year. Finally, in Gaza news, the paper reports on a hunger strike by "international supporters" arrested by Israel while sailing in Palestinian fishing boats near Gaza. The strikers are demanding the return of the fishing boats to the Palestinian owners.

Al Ayyam and Al Hayat Al Jadida lead with news that Palestinian Authority President Abbas met with King Abdullah of Jordan in Aqaba on November 20. Abdullah warned Israel to end its continued "siege" of Gaza and take immediate steps to end Palestinian suffering and reopen Gaza crossings. The three papers publish front-page photographs of the meeting and note that it was held two days after a secret meeting in Aqaba between Abdullah and Israeli officials Prime Minister Olmert and Defense Minister Barak. Al Quds notes that Jordan asked Israel to halt all "unilateral actions" in the West Bank and Gaza and stated that Israel will not be accepted by the Arab world until Palestinians have their own state and freedom. Al Quds further quotes Israel's Transportation Minister renewing his

call for targeted assassinations against Palestinian faction leaders in Gaza.

Al Ayyam and Al Hayat Al Jadida front page a second main story about Israeli settler violence and vandalism in Hebron and Jerusalem. The papers report that settlers in Hebron desecrated gravestones in a Muslim cemetery, and sprayed graffiti of Jewish symbols and "Death to Arabs," and insults to the Prophet Mohammad on a Hebron mosque. The two papers report that masked and armed Israeli settlers attacked 40 Palestinian homes, a number of cars and olive trees in the Hebron area on November 20, to protest an Israeli court ruling to evict settlers from a disputed Palestinian house. Al Hayat Al Jadida's lead photo shows Israeli settlers jeering at a member of the well-known Palestinian Rajaby family in Hebron and an inset photo of settler graffiti on the Hebron mosque.

Al Hayat Al Jadida and Al Ayyam's front pages report that in Jerusalem, the Israeli municipality "destroyed" a second protest tent for the Palestinian Al Kurd family whose house was turned over to "Israeli settlers" by municipal authorities. Al Quds' front page reports that the Palestinian protesters, aided by significant public support and media attention, have erected a third tent, especially in light of the November 20 E.U. Parliament's decision that Israeli removal of the tents is illegal under international law.

Al Hayat Al Jadida provides front page coverage of the celebration of renovations to the Palestinian heritage site Hisham's Palace in Jericho. The ceremony was attended by Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Fayyad, U.S. Consul General Jake Wallis, USAID Director Howard Sumka and other officials. Wallis is quoted saying that the project, "will contribute to reviving and improving the tourism sector." Al Ayyam runs a second USAID-related story on an inside page, noting that USAID Director Sumka and PA Minister of

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Education Al Alami launched "A laptop for every student" project for Palestinian schools on November 20 in Ramallah.

Al Hayat Al Jadida's front page reports that President Bush and Israel's Prime Minister Olmert will meet at the White House on November 24 to discuss the peace process, bilateral relations and Middle East regional issues. In other presidential news, Al Quds' front page reports that president-elect Obama has begun selecting his cabinet and advisors, and that Hilary Clinton might be the next U.S. Secretary of State.

Al Quds and Al Ayyam's front pages report that the Fatah Central Council will meet in Ramallah on November 23 to discuss several issues, including the end of Palestinian Authority President Abbas' term.

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Mohammad Yaghy writes in Al Ayyam under the title, "Reconciliation is impossible, but resolution is possible" (11/21): "The Cairo dialogue [for unity among Palestinian factions] didn't never had a chance of succeeding... and since the Palestinians have done away with the "resistance" option by signing the Oslo agreement, they no longer have anything left to give [leverage] Israel ...and thus, since 1993, Israel has behaved as if it were negotiating with itself... [negotiations] with the Arabs is a different issue since the Arabs still have many cards to hand Israel in return for a true, just resolution [to the conflict] and since the negotiations will be for an end to the broader Israeli-Arab conflict, not just the Palestinian portion."

2) Rajab Abu Sarayya opines in Al Ayyam under the title, "Security men and the politics lady" (11/21): "The 'by the way' comments made by [Israel's Foreign Minister Livni] the Israeli policy lady at a [recent] meeting with representatives of North American Jews in Jerusalem are significant. She demanded that Hamas recognize the Jewish state... The significance of the statements lies in the implicit admission that dialogue between Hamas and Israel has moved from the security level to a political one. She knows that Hamas

alone controls Gaza... [Israel thinks] there is a possibility for serious "development" towards negotiations between the "Gaza state" and Israel on a political solution that could produce two states living side-by-side: The state of Israel and the state of Gaza."

Walles